UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/24999
21 December 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 19 DECEMBER 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

We have learnt with astonishment the allegations of the other party concerning the circumstances relating to the meeting scheduled for 30 November and 1 December 1992 between the chieftains of the Saharan tribes, at the invitation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

1. In order to avoid any polemics in this matter and to emphasize the attitude of each of the parties regarding this meeting and the United Nations settlement process in general, I shall confine myself to the following points:

(a) The delegation of the other party has clearly refused to accept the practical arrangements the United Nations graciously suggested to the two parties, thereby displaying the negative attitude in which it presented itself to take part in this meeting.

(b) Likewise, its refusal to reply to the Special Representative's invitation to attend an initial informal contact meeting on the eve of the official meeting says a great deal about its intentions and its determination to obstruct progress. This is all the more true when one remembers that the contact meeting was part of the programme drawn up in advance by the Special Representative's office and accepted by the parties.

(c) As to the allegation whereby the delegation of tribal chieftains coming from Morocco included members who were not on the list of tribal chieftains provided by the Secretary-General in 1990, allow me to point out that the few members contested by the other party are tribal chieftains duly coopted to replace persons who have died or who, being elderly, had been unable to make the journey. It should be also emphasized that the coopting was done in accordance with the rules of Saharan tradition, rules which the other party itself defended in the course of the discussions which the Special Representative conducted last summer with both parties. In any event, it was for the Special Representative and for the Special Representative alone to determine whether the delegations sent by the two parties met the United Nations criteria.

2. To further clarify my country's position and to refute the allegations of the other party, it is worth rereading attentively the statement of 2 December 1992 by the Secretary-General's spokesman (SG/1974) on this subject.

(a) The first point to be noted is that the objective of this meeting was to enable the tribal chieftains to advise the Special Representative on questions relating to ways of identifying persons qualified to participate in the referendum. In other words, the advisory opinion requested of the tribal chieftains was above all an expert opinion on practical and specific questions which, despite the inevitable implications, did not appear to indicate a polemical politicization of the meeting. This is why it was inappropriate for either party to challenge the representativeness of the other delegation and thus exercise a right of veto in relation to the meeting and indirectly in relation to the process under way. This, moreover, is why the Moroccan delegation did not raise the problem of the five new tribal chieftains in the delegation sent by the other party.

(b) One further notes from the statement that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General received the delegation of notables designated by Morocco, and it gave him a document designed to apprise him of their point of view. The delegation appointed by Frente POLISARIO did not request a similar meeting. This clearly demonstrates the determination of the Kingdom of Morocco to cooperate with the United Nations with a view to accelerating the process and the obvious desire of the other party to obstruct progress and its refusal to pursue any implementation of the United Nations settlement plan.

Before concluding, I should like to refer to the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations (S/24966), of 14 December 1992, addressed to the Secretary-General and concerning the aforementioned meeting of tribal chieftains, in order to mention that this fraternal country was not invited to "observe" the Geneva meeting. Accordingly, in the absence of objective information, it was unable to make relevant comments on the circumstances of this meeting without the risk of loss of impartiality.

My country does, however, note with satisfaction that in the aforementioned letter Algeria considers it desirable "for every effort to be made to bring [the two parties] to honour the commitments they have made to allow the Special Representative, under the authority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to implement the settlement plan in its entirety as originally conceived by the United Nations and accepted by both parties" and that it undertakes to "continue to support ... the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Representative to find a ... settlement".

I should be grateful if you would have the content of this letter brought to the attention of the Security Council and issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmed SNOUSSI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative